Numb. CXXV.

The GUARDIAN.

——*Nunc formoſiſſimus Annus.* Virg.

Tueſday, Auguſt 5. 1713.

MEN of my Age receive a greater Pleaſure from fine Weather, than from any other ſenſual Enjoyment of Life. In ſpite of the Auxiliary Battle, or any Artificial Heat, we are apt to droop under a gloomy Sky; and taſte no Luxury, like a Blue Firmament and Sun ſhine. I have often, in a Splenetick Fit, wiſhed my ſelf a Dormouſe, during the Winter; and I never ſee one of thoſe ſnug Animals, wrapt up cloſe in his Fur, and compactly happy in himſelf; but I contemplate him with Envy, beneath the Dignity of a Philoſopher. If the Art of Flying were brought to Perfection, the uſe that I ſhould make of it, would be to attend the Sun round the World, and purſue the Spring through every Sign of the *Zodiac*. This Love of Warmth makes my Heart glad at the Return of the Spring. How amazing is the Change in the Face of Nature; when the Earth, from being bound with Froſt, or covered with Snow, begins to put forth her Plants and Flowers, to be cloathed with Green, diverſified with ten thouſand various Dies; and to exhale ſuch freſh and charming Colours, as fill every living Creature with Delight!

Full of Thoughts like theſe, I make it a Rule to loſe as little as I can of that bleſſed Seaſon; and accordingly riſe with the Sun, and wander through the Fields, throw my ſelf on the Banks of little Rivulets, or loſe my ſelf in the Woods. I ſpent a Day, or two this Spring at a Country Gentleman's Seat, where I feaſted my Imagination every Morning with the moſt luxurious Proſpect I ever ſaw. I uſually took my Stand by the Wall of an old Caſtle built upon an high Hill. A noble River ran at the Foot of it, which, after being broken by a heap of miſ-ſhapen Stones, glided away in a clear Stream, and wandering through two Woods on each ſide of it in many Windings, ſhone here and there, at a great diſtance, through the Trees. I could trace the Mazes for ſome Miles, till my Eye was led through two Ridges of Hills, and terminated by a vaſt Mountain in another County.

I hope the Reader will pardon me for taking his Eye from our preſent Subject of the Spring, by this Landskip; ſince it is at this Time of the Year only that Proſpects excel in Beauty. But if the Eye is delighted, the Ear hath likewiſe its proper Entertainment. The Muſick of the Birds, at this time of the Year, hath ſomething in it ſo wildly ſweet, as makes me leſs reliſh the moſt elaborate Compoſitions of *Italy*. The Vigour which the Warmth of the Sun pours afreſh into their Veins, prompts them to renew their Species; and thereby puts the Male upon wooing his Mate with more mellow Warblings, and to ſwell his Throat with more violent Modulations. It is an Amuſement, by no means below the Dignity of a Rational Soul, to obſerve the pretty Creatures flying in Pairs, to mark the different Paſſions in their Intrigues, the Curious Contexture of their Neſts, and their Care, and Tenderneſs of their little Off-ſpring.

I am particularly acquainted with a *Wag-tail* and his Spouſe, and made many Remarks upon the ſeveral Gallantries he hourly uſed, before the Coy Female would conſent to make him happy. When I ſaw in how many Airy Rings he was forced to purſue her; how ſometimes ſhe tripped before him in a pretty pitty pat Step, and ſcarce ſeemed to regard the cow'ring of his Wings, and the many awkard and foppiſh Contortions into which he put his Body to do her Homage: it made me reflect upon my own Youth, and the Caprices of the Fair, but fantaſtick *Teraminta*. Often have I wiſhed, that I underſtood the Language of Birds, when I have heard him exert an eager Chuckle at her leaving him; and do not doubt, but that he muttered the ſame Vows and Reproaches which I often have vented againſt that unrelenting Maid.

The

The Sight that gave me the most Satisfaction, was a Flight of young Birds, under the Conduct of the Father, and indulgent Directions and Assistance of the Dam. I took particular Notice of a Beau *Gold finch*, who was picking his Plumes, pruning his Wings, and, with great Diligence, adjusting all his gaudy Garniture. When he had equip'd himself with great Trimness and Nicety, he stretched his painted Neck, which seemed to brighten with new Glowings, and strained his Throat into many wild Notes and natural Melody. He then flew about the Nest in several Circles, and Windings, and invited his Wife, and Children into open Air. It was very entertaining to see the trembling, and the fluttering of the little Strangers, at their first Appearance in the World, and the different Care of the Male, and Female Parent, so suitable to their several Sexes. I could not take my Eye quickly from so entertaining an Object; nor could I help wishing, that Creatures of a superior Rank, would so manifest their mutual Affection, and so chearfully concurr in providing for their Off-spring.

I shall conclude this Tattle about the Spring, which I usually call *the Youth, and Health of the Year*, with some Verses which I transcribe from a Manuscript Poem upon *Hunting*. The Author gives Directions, that Hounds should breed in the Spring, whence he takes Occasion, after the Manner of the Ancients, to make a Digression in Praise of that Season. The Verses, here subjoined, are not all upon that Subject; but the Transitions slide so easily into one another, that I knew not how to leave off, till I had writ out the whole Digression.

In Spring, let loose thy Males. Then all Things prove
The Stings of Pleasure, and the Pangs of Love:
Ætherial Jove *then glads, with genial Showers,*
Earth's *mighty Womb, and strows her Lap with Flowers;*
Hence Juices mount, and Buds, emboldn'd, try
More kindly Breezes, and a softer Sky:
Kind Venus *revels. Hark! on ev'ry Bough,*
In lulling Strains the feather'd Warblers woo.
Fell Tigers soften in th' infectious Flames,
And Lions, fawning, court their brinded Dames:
Great Love *pervades the Deep; to please his Mate,*
The Whale, in Gambols, moves his monstrous Weight;
Heav'd by his Wayward Mirth old Ocean roars,
And scatter'd Navies bulge on distant Shores.

All Nature smiles; Come now, nor fear, my Love,
To taste the Odours of the Wood-bine Grove,
To pass the Evening Glooms, in harmless Play,
And, sweetly swearing, languish Life away.
An Altar, bound with recent Flowers, I rear
To Thee, best Season of the various Year;
All hail! such Days in beauteous Order ran,
So soft, so sweet, when first the World began,
In Eden's *Bowers, when Man's great Sire assign'd*
The Names, and Natures of the brutal Kind.
Then Lamb, and Lion friendly walk'd their Round,
And Hares, undaunted, lick'd the fondling Hound,
Wondrous to tell! But when, with luckless Hand,
Our daring Mother broke the sole Command,
Then Want, and Envy brought their Meagre Train,
Then Wrath came down, and Death had leave to reign:
Hence Foxes earth'd, and Wolves abhorr'd the Day,
And hungry Churles ensnar'd the nightly Prey,
Rude Arts at first; but witty Want refin'd
The Huntsman's Wiles, and Famine form'd the Mind.

Bold Nimrod *first the Lion's Trophies wore,*
The Panther bound, and lanc'd the bristling Boar;
He taught to turn the Hare, to bay the Deer,
And wheel the Courser in his mid Carreer:
Ah! had he there restrain'd his Tyrant Hand!
Let me, ye Pow'rs, an humbler Wreath demand,
No Pomps I ask, which Crowns and Sceptres yield,
Nor dang'rous Lawrels in the dusty Field;
Fast by the Fountain, and the limpid Spring,
Give me the Warfare of the Woods to sing,
To breed my Whelps, and healthful press the Game,
A mean, inglorious, but a guiltless Name.

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